

**ABSTRACT OF THE DISCLOSURE**

A communication system that allows a soft handoff to be completed, even when the communications link between the active base station and the mobile station deteriorates before the mobile station has received the handoff direction message. The mobile station maintains a list of base stations that the mobile station is in communication with, referred to as an "Active Set". In addition, the mobile station maintains another list of base stations that are proximate to the base stations in the active set. This list is referred to as the "Neighbor Set". A memory within the mobile station includes information that would allow the mobile station to demodulate information transmitted from those base stations on the neighbor set. In accordance with the disclosed method and apparatus, the mobile station places a base station in the active set upon including the base station in a pilot strength measurement message (PSMM). The mobile station monitors transmissions from all of the base stations on the active set to receive a handoff direction message (HDM).

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